



Department of Conservation and Recreation
Stewardship Council Meeting
October 27, 2006
Community Boating, Boston, MA

Meeting Minutes

Stewardship Councilors in Attendance: Chairman Dick Cross, Councilors Whitney Hatch, Julian Agyeman, John Natoli, Michael Dutton, Henry Lee, Laura Johnson and Christina Crowley.

Public Attendees: Dick Miller, Lake Cochituate Advisory Council; Carole Berkowitz, Protect Our Water Resources; Mike Ryan, Friends of the Fells; Renata von Tscharner, Charles River Conservancy; John Allen, MassBike; Doc Westerling, Merrimack College; Leo Garneau, Northeastern Consulting Forestry Service; Steve Olanoff, Friends of Blue Hills; Janet Hunkel, Southwest Corridor Conservancy; Barry Gold, Spot Pond Boating & Outdoor Recreation of Hopkinton; David Watson, MassBike; Alan French, Bay Circuit Alliance; Peter Brooks, Watertown Bike Commission; Cara Seiderman, City of Cambridge; Steve Miller, Cambridge Bike Committee; Miriam Regan –Fiore, Communities for Fells Preservation; Gregory Core, Massachusetts Forestry Association.

DCR Staff in Attendance: Commissioner Stephen Burrington, Tricia Singer, Margie Lynch, Sharon Hoey, Dan Driscoll, Danny O'Brien, Leslie Luchonok, Bob O'Connor (EOEA), Nikki Belmonte, Joe Rotondo and Jack Donahue.

I. Call To Order (1:30 p.m.), Chairman Cross

- a. Chairman Cross announced that public comments would be taken at the beginning.
- b. Chairman Cross reconfirmed three *Strategic Goals* which are: to have an agency capable of delivering world class conservation and recreation services; to demonstrate progress towards world class parks; and to generate public appreciation and support for the resources we manage.

II. Public Comment

- a. **Carole Berkowitz** of Protect Our Water Resources inquired as to where the money for weevils will come from and if the money set aside to be used for chemicals could be used. The amount is approximately \$30K and the Cochituate State Park Advisory Committee does not want to use trust money for weevils. Chairman Cross suggested that this question be taken directly to Mike Gildesgame.
- b. **Dick Miller**, from Lake Cochituate Advisory Council, asked if a letter that he submitted back in January could be added to the appropriate minutes. Mr. Miller feels there have been major shortfalls by DCR in rapid response and effective partnering. He noted that the timing of the installation of the Solar Bee circulators was wrong and that other types of circulators were not compared. Mr. Miller also noted that the milfoil weevils to be used at Pagan Cove Superfund site may be problematic. Chairman Cross stated that the level of appropriateness for the Stewardship Council would be reporting dissatisfaction of service from a DCR program.
- c. **John Allen** of MassBike presented a written summary of "Issues with DCR bicycle policy" noting that some parkways have been repurposed over time to serve only motor vehicles. Mr. Allen applauded Dan Driscoll's efforts, but emphasized that DCR needs to accommodate bicyclists on all roads.
- d. **Leo Garneau**, Vice Chair of the Massachusetts Professional Foresters, stated support for putting the Central Berkshire management plan into practice.
- e. **Janet Hunkel** of the Southwest Corridor Conservancy asked how many horticulturalists and volunteer coordinators are on staff for DCR. Ms. Hunkel also inquired about the \$225K earmark for a horticulturalist or volunteer coordinator at the Southwest Corridor. She noted that only two full-time DCR employees are assigned to the park and much of the work is done by the

Conservancy. Ms. Hunkel stated that more efficient coordination is needed for organizing volunteers. She also requested the Stewardship Council meetings be scheduled for evenings so more constituents can attend.

- f. **Renata von Tscharnier** of the Charles River Conservancy asked if there is an equivalent to former MDC decision-making meetings, and if not, what solution can be offered to help Friends groups and the public be aware of decision making. Commissioner Burrington does not believe that there would be an efficient way to organize such an effort at this point with an agency this size.
- g. **Cara Seiderman** of the City of Cambridge stated her support for DCR's bikeway vision. Ms. Seiderman requested for the Bicycling and Pedestrian Advisory Committee of Cambridge be able to comment.
- h. **Steve Miller**, Executive Director of Hub on Wheels, thanked DCR for providing a bikeway vision. He suggested DCR consider how to connect with, empower and facilitate community groups on these types of strategic visions.
- i. **Megan Regan-Fiore** of Communities for Fells Preservation read a letter asking if the recently approved development at 2 Lynn Fells parkway (gas pump and Dunkin Donuts) will be subject to the Historic Parkway Treatment Guidelines. Commissioner Burrington stated that DCR will not widen the parkway for Dunkin Donuts.

III. Committee Updates and Meeting Schedules

a. Finance Committee, *Whitney Hatch*

- i. The Finance committee did not meet in October. The Committee would like to identify areas that the new administration should focus on and come back to next meeting with a preliminary recommendation.
- ii. Councilor Lee stated that it is important to think broadly about the needs of the agency and not be constrained by the last four years.

b. Policy Committee, *Julian Agyeman*

- i. Councilor Agyeman commended DCR for the Memorial Gifts policy briefing and moved that the Council adopt policy. *All in favor*
- ii. Councilor Crowley presented the Public Participation policy for Council meetings, proposing to add a sixth item stating "The Stewardship Council reserves the right to amend this policy." Councilor Lee suggested clarification to item #2: "If participants are part of a group, each group may choose one person to speak for that group." Councilor Crowley moved to adopt the policy with these changes. *All in favor*

c. Resource Management Plan Committee, *Henry Lee*

- i. The Committee focused on the Central Berkshire management plan and Councilor Lee commended Jim DiMaio and Bob O'Connor for their work. The Committee was notified that a forest harvest policy is nearing completion.
- ii. Councilor Lee announced that the Chestnut Hill plan may be on the agenda for November.

III. Adoption of Central Berkshire District Forest Management Resource Plan, *Jim DiMaio*

- a. Jim DiMaio gave a presentation on the plan accompanied by a summary, of the plans and public participation, summary of the Ecoregional Assessment and GIS maps. The area includes 18 DCR facilities. The Plan provides for biodiversity, native forests (minus invasive species), water quality, diverse wildlife, and aesthetics.
- b. Mr. DiMaio noted that the latest version of the plan included comments on climate change as suggested by the Resource Management Planning Committee.

- c. Public issues of concern included native forests and fragmentation, rare and early successional species and a balance of reserve and working forests.

Councilor Agyeman recommended citing the Commonwealth's policy on climate change and responding on page 14. Councilor Lee suggested addressing the major implications of climate change in forests such as temperature and rainfall.

Councilor Natoli asked if there are any unique issues with the Central Berkshire region. Bob O'Connor replied that forest fragmentation was a particular concern.

Councilor Hatch suggested a brief statement be included that addresses the green certification program in this region.

Changes will be made and Plan will be presented for Adoption on Nov. 30.

IV. Commissioner's Report, Commissioner Stephen Burrington

a. Visible progress

- i. DCR will kick off several large projects this fall including the reconstruction of the Mt. Greylock road; a 5-year, \$7.5M bridge painting program; and design plans for all of the closed pools in collaboration with communities.
- ii. DCR received the Commonwealth's Sustainability award.

b. Building a great agency

- i. Important changes were made in the structure of the Division of Planning & Engineering to increase effectiveness and efficiency and provide for consistent project management across the agency. New appointments include Joe Orfant as Acting Chief of Project Design and Management and Dan Driscoll heading up the office of Green Infrastructure.

c. Public confidence & support

- i. Total spending is at a 19-year high, with the operating budget creeping up from a 20-year low. Much of agency spending goes to earmarks while basic agency functions lack sufficient resources. DCR's budget is separated by law into 22 accounts. Additional spending has been provided almost exclusively for designated projects. \$125M/year for operations and \$125M/year for capital projects is sufficient if agency can spend it in the right way.
- ii. The DCR bikeway vision is in its early stages of development. The presentation does not include all bikeway projects, but is a glimpse of the future. DCR is presenting this preliminary version in the interest of involving the Council, the public and interested groups starting at the earliest possible time.

Councilor Lee suggested looking at how other states solved the basic issue of misallocation of resources by elected officials.

V. DCR Bikeway Vision, Dan Driscoll and Danny O'Brien

- a. Dan Driscoll gave a presentation accompanied by a bikeway vision map. All trails on the map comply with national and ADA standards for hard surface trails.
- b. Mr. Driscoll highlighted one map depicting the connections created between urban communities and the greater landscape with this trail network. DCR is uniquely suited to connect people to the parks and ecological features.

- c. Mr. Driscoll showcased several projects including the Cape Cod Rail Trail reconstruction, Charles River Basin Pathway restoration, Norwottuck Rail Trail reconstruction, Blackstone Valley, Mass Central Rail Trail, Charles River and Mystic River connectors to the Minuteman Trail, and Neponset River Greenway.
- d. DCR is talking with MBTA about becoming the leader in the Mass Central initiative.
- e. DCR will work with municipalities in arranging stewardship contracts to take care of routine maintenance.
- f. Bottom line rough numbers fall at ~\$82M for the entire program. Currently \$19M is in place.

Councilor Lee complimented DCR on the vision and the ability to think coherently about how to maintain these capital projects. He suggested considering user fees. Commissioner Burrington stated that DCR will harness community energy during the planning and design process to create maintenance arrangements before the trails open. Three or more models of for structuring maintenance agreements are available and can be used where they are appropriate.

Councilor Agyeman asked if rubber surfacing is an option. Mr. Driscoll replied that porous pavement is not the best option due to sublevel frost heaves.

- VI. **Approval of Minutes from 9/29/06 Meeting** – no quorum, to be approved at next meeting. It was noted to replace Julian Agyeman's name to Henry Lee under RMP Committee update.

Meeting adjourned 3:25 pm